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THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY,

OCTOBER 17, 1849.

BY

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PREFACE.

The following discourse has thus long been withheld, because its presentation to the public was thought unnecessary among the numerous valuable works on the same subject, which are within the easy reach of all. It is now published in compliance with the continued solicitations of many brethren on both sides of the questions discussed, who have kindly expressed a wish to see it in print. A second object is to correct the various misrepresentations which have appeared in the public journals and elsewhere, by letting the discourse speak for itself.

To those "who have studied the point," the discourse will offer nothing new; its single aim was at first, and is now, to arouse attention to a subject of growing importance.

The sermon itself appears now in very much the same shape in which it was originally delivered. A few texts of scripture have been added in their appropriate places.

The accompanying notes were subsequently written, to meet some of the leading objections which have been suggested to the author and others, against the views which the discourse brings forward. May God speed only the truth!

RAHWAY, Jan. 9, 1850



A DISCOURSE.

Daniel XII. 4.

"BUT THOU, O DANIEL, SHUT UP THE WORDS, AND SEAL THE BOOK, EVEN TO THE TIME OF THE END: MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."

HERE is a painful darkness, relieved by a most cheering promise. So God makes the light and shade to mingle together. The day of clouds is not, you observe, always to continue. When the sun is just sinking to his setting, the shadows are to flee away, and the heavens glow into noontide splendor. And so it shall come to pass that at "evening time, at least, there shall be light."

The *knowledge* here spoken of is knowledge respecting the kingdom of Christ. This is generally admitted. Indeed the context shows it. The "words shut up," and

the "knowledge to be increased," must refer to the same thing. Now, Daniel is speaking of the final deliverance of the Jewish people, and this event is usually believed to be introductory to the consummation of the kingdom. His prophetic years, also, respecting this event are shown to synchronize with the continuance of the beast and the false prophet of the Apocalypse. These three grand events have, therefore, been usually associated together as the triple signal for the dawn of the "latter day" glory.

We consider it, then, as determined that it is not religious knowledge in general, so much as the particular knowledge of the *nature*, and *time*, and *accompaniments* of Christ's coming kingdom upon earth, which receives here the promise of increase.

With this understanding, the text discloses several highly interesting particulars.

1. That, until the time should draw near, an obscurity more or less deep should rest upon the details of the coming kingdom. The church should still "search what, or

what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in the prophets did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." Now, the sufferings have been manifested; but the glory is not yet made evident. The cherubim bend inquiringly towards the mercy seat. "Wherefore, brethren, let us gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope, to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 11-13.

2. As the time of the end should draw near, the promise assures us just as distinctly that God would crown this anxious scrutiny with increasing success. The thick veil, upon which so many eager eyes have been so long straining, at length gradually grows more and more translucent, until the mystery of the sheckinah (the tabernacling of God with men) becomes effulgently revealed by its own immediate presence. "The seventh angel sounds" and the kingdom is come. Then, immediately the "temple of

God is opened in Heaven, the veil is gone, and the ark of His covenant is seen." Rev. xi. 19. "They shall see, eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion." Is. lii. 8.

3. That this progress in knowledge is to be effected in conjunction with human effort to understand the Scriptures. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." That is, as Michaelis explains it-" Many shall give their sedulous attention to the understanding of these things." They shall search the word of the Lord for light: and hence their success. Let me confirm this interpretation by a single quotation from the prophet Amos. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Amos viii. 11, 12.

In the present case, however, the result is reversed. They "shall run to and fro, and shall find it"—knowledge shall be increased.

You will note, then, that as the kingdom draws near, human effort to understand is both stipulated and made obligatory, in order to success. When the church has arrived upon the very borders of the inheritance, the servant of God resolutely sets himself to go, step by step, up the mount Nebo (i. e. prophecy), and at each ascent the goodly land rises upon His view with greater breadth and distinctness.

Fathers and Brethren! We are at this moment arrived at the "time of the end." We run no risk of being charged with rashness in this assertion, for it is generally admitted by the wisest and best of God's servants. Indeed the missionary operations of the church have received much of their present vigor from the light which has been thrown upon this fact. Besides, the "signs of the times" remarkably confirm this usual interpretation of prophecy.

To us, then, the promise of the text appeals with peculiar force. This is the time of the end—the time of promised light. We are the very men to whom it assigns a duty: "to run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord." Whatever neglect of this subject may have been tolerated in past time, our excuses for such neglect are taken away. We stand at a most critical period with regard to the approaching kingdom, and the church seeks knowledge of that kingdom at the priest's lips.

At this juncture it becomes an interesting question, whether all attainable light respecting this kingdom is enjoyed. Is the whole active Christian world agreed respecting its nature and accompaniments? If not, how far are we agreed? And what remains yet dark that study and discussion may, by God's blessing, clear up? These, brethren, it is thought, are all important questions. We see not how they can be deemed either impertinent or frivolous.

These questions derive additional interest from the fact, that the church professes at

last to be in earnest in fulfilling her great commission. The subject of missions everywhere engages attention. She prays daily, "thy kingdom come." She is girding on her armor to go forth to the war. God, in the meantime, is shaking his hand over the nations. Surely now, if ever, the true nature, and accompaniments of Christ's coming kingdom demand our attention and settled understanding. Questions which affect these points may not be dismissed in haste. We may not let them lapse into neglect. Every consideration which makes effort for the conversion of men desirable, makes it also desirable that every such effort should be guided by scriptural light. The subject of missions can rise to its proper importance, only when the church is made to see the hand of her Lord guiding her step by step.

Let it be supposed, then, that the church's present light concerning the kingdom is incomplete. Let it be supposed that there are important differences of view, upon the subject of her great commission, amongst those who are equally distinguished in their zeal

for the truth and for godliness. What, under these circumstances, is her duty? Her duty seems plain. She may not shift off this subject: she must come back to some starting point where all stand together, and from this point she *must*,—it is her bounden duty,—with her eye raised to God for light, and with the word of God in her hands, examine, and discuss, and determine the path of her feet.

Under the increasing conviction, then, brethren, that the present juncture imposes this step upon us, let me here before you repeat these questions:

Are we all agreed respecting "this gospel of the kingdom, which must be preached as a witness amongst all nations?"

If not, how far are we agreed?

And finally, upon what points of difference is it desirable that critical skill and ministerial study should be brought to bear?

I shall first briefly state some points upon which we are all agreed. I do this to prevent misunderstanding in the outset. It is by no means uncommon to argue upon the supposition, that a denial of *these* points is involved in the controversy upon those which succeed.

1. First, then, we are all agreed that there will certainly be set up a glorious kingdom upon earth, and that there will be but one such kingdom. Moreover, it is a kingdom "to come,"-a time when "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Dan. vii. 27. This is God's grand object in His dealings with us-the redemption of this ruined world. We are agreed that the "son of man"—the "second Adam"—the "man Christ Jesus," is to reign "king of kings" and Lord of lords, over the whole earth. "All nations shall serve him." Ps. lxxii. 11.—That it is to be an everlasting kingdom. "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of his dominion there shall be no end." Dan. vii. 27: Luke i. 33,-And that it is to be a Holy kingdom: "They

shall not hurt nor destroy in all His holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Is. xi. 9.

So have prayed both Jew and Gentile: "Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Ps. lxvii. 6, 7, 8.

And again: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done upon the earth as in Heaven." Matth. vi. 10.

2. We are all agreed as to the way by which God saves men, and introduces them into His kingdom. "Grace and truth come by Jesus Christ, and in *Him* is life." John i. 17.

The Divine Word becomes incarnate and reveals to us the invisible Father. As Mediator in human flesh He is God to us: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the

Father, He hath revealed Him." John i. 18. We are agreed that He is a crucified Christ for the sins of all His people equally, whether Jew or Gentile; for "there is no difference, as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. iii. 22, 23. Hence, "we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God." 1 Cor. i. 23. He is Spiritual Life to all equally; for "of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." John i. 16. And He raises all up at the last day: "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that is living and believeth in me, shall never die." John xi. 25. We all believe this. For though "we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed," 1 Cor. xv. 51, and hence, either by resurrection or translation, all His people shall "know the power of Christ's resurrection," and "attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. iii. 10, 11.

- 3. We are all agreed, that the offer of the gospel is in the same terms for all, whether Jew or Gentile: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x.4. "We believe" (says the Jew) "that we shall be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, even as they." Acts xv. 11.—As to the way of life, then, all are on the same level: there is no difference: "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female." Gal. iii. 28. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." Eph. iv. 5, 6.—And when Christ presents His church, He presents it as one church: "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. v. 27. There is "one fold and one shepherd." John x. 16.—We have no dispute, then, respecting the offer or the terms of the way of life.
- ¶ 4. We are all agreed that mere nationality, without conversion, secures no future bless-

ings. A man must be "born again" to inherit the promises to the Jews or Gentiles. For, "in Christ Jesus, it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but a new creature that availeth." Gal. vi. 15. Hence, though all the natural seed of Abraham "have not obtained that which they seek after, yet the election hath obtained it, and the rest are blinded." Rom. xi. 7. Yet, on the other hand, "though some did not believe, their unbelief shall not make the faith of God without effect." Rom. iii. 3.

- 5. We are all agreed, that the church has received a general commission to publish the gospel among all nations. There is no dispute here. Her duty is simple and imperative. Every man and every church is beholden to our Lord for the fulfilment of that obligation, to "Go unto all nations and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark xvi. 15.
- 6. I think I may venture to add a sixth particular. We are at least generally agreed,

that God has given to his Jewish people a prominence in spreading the knowledge of salvation through the world, and that this is true in every era of their history. It was so, first, as they were the depositaries of the truth, "To them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. iii. 2. Secondly, Their very fall was for the same purpose. "Their diminishing has been the riches of the Gentiles," Rom, xi, 12. The whirlwind that threw down the cedar of Lebanon, scattered also its seeds to take root in every land. And thirdly, their restoration will in some way wonderfully secure the same great object. It will be the prelude of millennial glory. "The receiving of them shall be as life from the dead." Rom. xi. 15. The tree that was fallen down shall "strike root downwards and bear fruit upwards." "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root. Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." Is. xxvii. 6.

So far, then, we are agreed. We receive these things (leaving the last out of view) as among those "certain doctrines so settled by the faith of the church that they are no longer open questions. They are finally adjudged and determined beyond all rational or innocent dispute." They are now supplying all the stimulus to the Christian's exertions to save souls from death. I repeat it, so far we are agreed. I beseech you, then, let not these questions be confounded with those which follow.

But at this point there is discovered a remarkable divergence. The friends of Christ and the gospel separate into two distinct bodies. There are questions upon which, against the usually received interpretation, we see a strong band of able, self-denying men opposing a different interpretation. Their zeal is wide awake. They point you to a host of witnesses for their belief in every past age of the church. They call on their brethren as with the voice of a trumpet.

Now, these interpretations which they propose are generally regarded with coldness. Some affect to sneer at them. They are systematically excluded from most of our popular religious journals. Many regard them as not at all practical. Brethren, I know not what you think, but to my mind the question of the truth or the falsity of these views enters into the very life of the church's progress, of her comfort, of her proper success. I confess that I cannot see how they can be neglected. Bear with me then, while in the next place, I present three of these points with a little detail.

1. The first respects what has been called the "Bible Law of Missions."* Is there any such law? What is it? Is it indispensable? Or may it be disregarded? These questions divide us.

On the one side, the practical belief is that in efforts at evangelizing the world,

^{*} We take pleasure in referring the reader on this subject to the first volume of the Jewish Chronicle for a series of excellent articles, doubtless from the pen of the late editor, the Rev. John Lillie. At the same time we express our obligations to this source for the aid by which we are enabled to state succinctly several of the points at issue on this question.

the distinction between Jew and Gentile is to be discarded. Prominent efforts, and indeed even separate missions for the Jews, if not scouted, are undervalued. It is intimated that the middle wall of partition is broken down; that Gentiles are admitted as fellow heirs; and hence, that the Jew, in the eye of the gospel, has lost both his nationality and his privileges.

On the other side, it is maintained that the Jews are to be regarded now, as they have ever been, as "the children of the kingdom;" whereas, Gentiles are they who shall "come from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven." Matt. viii. 12. Paul declares them still "beloved for the fathers' sakes,"-and "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Rom. xi. 28, 29. These men say "that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," Rom. xv. 8, whereas the Gentiles are received as "aliens into

the commonwealth of Israel:" Eph. ii. 12.
—that the Jew has "much advantage every way:" Rom. iii. 1, 2. "to him pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," Rom. ix. 4,—and hence, that in this sense there is a marked distinction.

One side argues, because "Christ crucified is the wisdom of God and the power of God" to both Jew and Greek, Rom. i. 16, that, therefore, when the church, recognising, in her efforts at conversion, no distinction, or indeed even practically passing by the Jew, simply proclaims the gospel indiscriminately, she has done her duty.

The other declares that "the gospel of Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, but yet to the Jew first." Rom. i. 16. These men point us to Christ's rule to his apostles as imperative in all ages and of universal obligation. "This gospel must be preached among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." They hence argue that "it is

necessary that the gospel should first be spoken unto the Jew." We are pressed by the fact that the first preachers of the gospel followed this rule invariably-followed it after repulse upon repulse-followed it although (as in the case of Paul and Barnabas) apostles to the Gentiles themselves, -followed it just as much as ever, even after that memorable announcement: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles," Acts xiii. 46, as their proceedings in the very next city, Iconium, testify, Acts xiv. 1,-followed it up to the last voice of warning which closes the Bible history. Acts xxviii. 20-31.

The one side declares that the threatenings and the rewards of the gospel are presented with equal fulness and in the same way to Jew and Gentile indiscriminately.

The other preaches that God, in his judgment, will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul of man,

but of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;"—"but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, but to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." Rom. ii. 9, 10.

On the one side, a system of interpretation is adopted, which, while it assigns to the Jews, literally and fully, all the special *evils* pronounced against them, melts away or transfers to the Gentile church all the Jews' special promised blessings.

The other declares, "Thus saith the Lord; like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." "And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxii. 42—xxxi. 28.

The one side maintains that under the gospel the peculiar privileges and relations of the Jewish people to God are abolished.

The other declares, "Thus saith the Lord; I will forgive their iniquity, and I will re-

member their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord; which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxi. 34–37.

One side declares that "the relations of the Jews to the coming kingdom of God, as unfolded in the scheme of redemption, are precisely the same with those of the Gentiles."

The other asks with Paul, "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy so are the branches." Rom. xi. 12-16.

And what, brethren, is the result of all this? Just what might be expected.

On the one side, an occasional prayer for the Jew discharges all obligation.

On the other, special missions to the Jew are regarded as of indispensable importance. With the great apostle to the Gentiles, they cry, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. x. 1.

The one side declares that "in missionary discourses it is unnecessary to discuss the question whether Palestine is to be again occupied by Jews."

The other repels the assertion with a "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury and in great wrath; and I will bring them unto this place, and I will

cause them to dwell safely: And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant

with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." Jer. xxxii. 36-42; xxxiii. 8, 9; Amosix. 14, 15.—Where did God ever make such a promise, which was not fulfilled?

One side, while it wisely aims at the distinct preparation of missionaries to meet the peculiarities of every sect of the Gentiles, whether Indians, or Mahommedans, or Hindoos, or the followers of Confucius, or aught else, seems to regard special preparation for the Jew as of little importance. The other, while it admits that the church, as the "debtor to all men," is required to exercise her wisdom, so as to meet the various cases of the Gentiles; yet reminds us that there is after all only one *Divine* distinction, as to missionaries of the gospel; and that is the distinction, "The apostle to the circumcision" and "The apostle to the uncircumcision."

In short, one side assumes that separate missions for the Jew, and extraordinary efforts at success with the Jew, are comparatively of little moment; while the other, hastening forward by faith to the dawn of the "latter day" glory, cries with Isaiah, "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, until He establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth." Isaiah lxii. 6, 7.

Now here is a serious difference. Can any man fail to perceive that the interpretation which favors the one side or the other enters into the vitals of missionary operations? How can any friend of missions regard the question as frivolous?

Some of you point me to the millions who are dying here and across the ocean, and ask, why not think of them? Why is our attention to be diverted by such a topic? Yes, brethren, I do think of them, and my heart bleeds for them. But what if Calvin be right in affirming that Christ at his ascension "commands the gospel to be preached first

to the Jews, because to them belongs the right of primogeniture"—and further, that "under the gospel the Gentiles have their own order, indeed, though it is a secondary one to that of the Jew?"* (On Acts i. 8, and iii. 26, and passim.)

I turn to that remarkable passage, "For the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob," and the Holy Spirit assures me by the mouth of Paul that it is the literal Israel which is here designated. Now what if that interpretation be true, which assigns the very next verses to Israel also, and assumes that God is really speaking to the Jewish nation when He says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the

^{*} See also on Rom. i. 16. . . . The apostle "joins the Gentiles in general with the Jews in the participation of the gospel; yet he does not thereby degrade the Jews from their proper position and order, inasmuch as they were first as regards promise and calling. Hence he preserves to them their own prerogative, while he constantly joins the Gentiles with them as fellow partakers, although in an inferior position."

darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but the Lord shall arise upon Thee, and his glory shall be seen upon Thee; and the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising?"—What, I ask, if it be true, that the salvation of the Jews be here, and throughout the Scriptures, held up as the prelude of signal blessings to the whole world? If God has really placed Israel first, it is at the peril of our missionary enterprises that we place Israel last. And what shall be said, when we see that while we annually raise our hundreds of thousands for the Gentiles, the support of two solitary missionaries in a neighboring city actually exhausts all our sympathy for the seed of Abraham? How, then, can any friend of missions refuse to investigate this interesting question? And especially, how can any "steward of the mysteries of God," who aims at the character of a "scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," postpone its examination under the evasive

plea that more important subjects demand attention? (Note A.)

I. The second point of difference respects the *nature* and the *accompaniments* of the coming "kingdom of God."

We all pray, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We all look with certain hope for the establishment of that kingdom. We are all agreed that there is but one such kingdom; when the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." But a glance at the church will satisfy any one, that as to the nature and accompaniments of that kingdom we are not all agreed.

What, then, do we mean by the kingdom to come? Do we of the present day stand on the same ground with the disciples of old? Is the great object to which the prayer, and faith, and hope of the church now reach forward, the same with that for which all the children of faith, "who died in faith,

not having received the promises," looked, and longed, and waited? What is this kingdom for which we pray?

Some of us reply, that it is only a spiritual kingdom. The glory of "the latter day" when the "kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given unto the people of the saints of the Most High," is a state which is to be seen and enjoyed on this side of the coming of our Lord. If it is to last for a thousand years, then by so much, at least, is the advent of Christ postponed:—and hence, as they reason, to look for the appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven now is little short of absurd.

To confirm this view, almost every Scriptural expression concerning that kingdom is interpreted as figurative. Jesus is a prophet in person upon earth, and a priest in person upon earth, but never a king. The "sufferings" are literal, but "the glory" is not. He is really "led as a lamb to the slaughter," but He is never literally to reign "in Mount

Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously," Isaiah xxiv. 33. From the wonderfully arranged birth in Bethlehem, Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 4-6; Luke ii., down to the riding upon an ass's colt, Matt. xxi. 4, 5, and thence onward to the closing scene of "making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," Is. liii. 9-12; Mark xv. 28, all is literal, all is real; but after that all is elusive figure.

"Thy kingdom come!"—a kingdom, in which no departed saint has any share;—in which the Jewish people inherit no peculiar privileges;—in which God's dwelling with men means only His spiritual presence with them just as now—a time of "joy in the whole earth," which is yet a time when the days of "fasting and mourning" because the Bridegroom remains "taken away from us," are continued;—while to look for anything else,—to expect the return and personal presence of Jesus, is esteemed a carnal view.

This is the kingdom for which we pray, and labor, and wait; a kingdom, perhaps near indeed, but which, if it come at all, comes far on this side of the advent of our Lord, and leaves the church under the assurance that the appearance of the "Son of Man in the clouds of heaven" need not be anticipated for certainly a thousand years.

Such, brethren, is the prayer on one side; and I need not add, that whether right or wrong, it is practically the meaning of that prayer in this age of the church, with two thirds of Christendom, and in our own country with even a larger proportion.

Now turn to the other view. Here you have the kingdom and the second coming of Christ strictly associated together. This is insisted upon as indispensable to a right understanding of the subject. The coming of the King ("who has gone to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return," Luke xix. 11, 12) and the setting up of the kingdom, are contemporaneous. To pray for the kingdom is really to pray also for the coming of our Lord. It is contended that the

Scriptures present this as the object of the church's faith and hope. We are to "wait for God's Son from heaven," I Thess. i. 10; and it is to those who "look for Him, that He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Heb. ix. 28. To dissociate the "coming" from the "kingdom," it is said, is to reduce you unavoidably to a single alternative. You either destroy the predicted kingdom, or you practically expel from the church the prominent gospel motive, of patient "looking for and hasting unto that day of God." (Note B.)

Again, these men consider that as the words respecting Christ's humiliation are literal, so they see not why the words respecting the glory are not literal. If "God manifest in the flesh" must be born in Bethlehem, because thus it is written by the prophet, "And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall He come who is to be the Ruler of Israel," Micah v. 2,—why is not God manifest in the flesh, even the Lord of hosts, to reign in Mount Zion and dwell in Jerusalem, because

thus it is written by the same prophet:
"And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth even for ever?" Micah iv. 6-8. As the "man Christ Jesus" was literally "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," they see not why the Lord God shall not literally give unto Him the "throne of his father David, and his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even for ever?" Is. ix. 7.

They give hints also thus: The Jew says, "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up? (signifying, of course, what death he has died.) Who is this Son of Man?" John xii. 33, 34. But the Jew was wrong. He stumbled at a crucified Christ by metaphorizing away the sufferings. The Gentile answers: "We have heard out of the gospel that Christ having suffered hath ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on

the right hand of God." Seeing then that "He ever liveth to make intercession," Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25, how sayest thou that "the Son of Man shall return, having received for himself a kingdom, and shall appoint unto one servant ten cities and to another five? shall we have this man to reign over us?" Luke xix. 11-28. But may not the Gentile be wrong, and stumble by metaphorizing away the glory?

In fine, these men associate the coming

of Christ and the kingdom, thus:

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead, at his appearing and kingdom," 1 Tim. v. 21.

And again-

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, King of

kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Tim. vi. 13-15.

And they speak of the time of the kingdom and its concomitants thus. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." What is this? We reply, "The latter-day" glory. "Are we all agreed upon this?" "Yes, all: we all preach it." "Very well, read on." "And the four-and-twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth." Rev. xi. 15-18.

Now here, say they, are the coming kingdom (as universally admitted), the first resurrection with its adjudged rewards, and the "gathering out of the kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity," put closely together.

Such, then, is the difference. Brethren! certainly in an age of missions these things may not be thrust into a corner. Consider a moment. Do we need to be told, whatever be our theory of the millennium, that it is a clear doctrine of the word of God, that the church is to look, and long, and wait for the real, visible second coming of the Lord, and that we are to "take heed, watch and pray; for we know not when the time is?" Mark xiii. 33.

See, how the exulting faith and hope of the faithful minister postponed his rejoicing in his converts to Christ, until the joy of that hour,—"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" 1 Thess. ii. 19. See the yearnings of an apostle that his hearers may "be accounted worthy to escape all the evils which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."-" To the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thess. iii. 13. Is it the hour of the believer's death, and his peace and hope in that hour, upon which the apostle's prayer terminates? Nay, but, "I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 23. What is the object to which the apostles directed the diligence and hope of the people of God ?-" Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be patient and hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 13. What is it, in a word, to which the longing eye of the child of God has been directed, at every time, when

he has commemorated the sacrifice of his Lord? Does he not "show forth the Lord's death till he come?"* 1 Cor. xi. 26. Faith, at the same moment, turns to "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,"—and then "blesses God who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time; wherein she greatly rejoices too, though under manifold temptations, that her trial may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 2-7.

We all consider this point as settled. Indeed, the only wonder is that it need be repeated. Now, brethren, if it be true, as is stated, that any received view of the king-

^{*} An observant reader of the scriptures cannot fail to remark how continually this sentiment is seen cropping out in unexpected places. How could this be, if the same rich vein were not underlying the whole surface of scripture truth?

dom is practically driving out of the church "that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour," who will affirm that this is no important matter? (Note C.)

The scriptures, throughout, inform us that when Christ does come, he shall come as a "thief in the night." "When they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction overtakes them and they shall not escape." 1 Thess v. 2, 3. This solemn question, then, is proposed to us. Suppose that Christ were to come now, where would you find an age of the world where both the world and the church were lulled into a deeper security on this subject than just at this moment? Is a man to be regarded as a troubler in Israel, then, if he cry to the secure church, "Be ye, therefore, ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh?" Matt. xxiv. 44.

But it is replied:—We do admit the doctrine. We expect a kingdom to be set up before the advent; but do we not admit also Christ's speedy coming as a thing possible? Let us understand this. Do you mean that it is possible that there may be no "filling of the earth with the knowledge of the Lord"—that there may be no universal kingdom? Is it possible that the church may, after all, be mistaken; and that she may have been under a perpetual illusion concerning all "that the prophets have spoken?" None of us will allow this. Or, perhaps, you mean to take the other ground, and associate the advent with the kingdom. If so, then we are so far agreed. But we earnestly ask, is there any other alternative?

Isit true, however, that the present theory of the coming kingdom is exerting no baneful influence? Let us feel the pulse of the church a little to determine.

Says one, in commenting on the closing words of the Apocalypse; "It ought to be noticed that the prayer, 'Come, Lord Jesus,' in its full and complete sense, as calling upon the Lord to come in the 'clouds of Heaven,' and wind up sublunary

affairs, and enter on His everlasting kingdom, is not to be offered, until the prophets are fulfilled, the morning of the Resurrection about to dawn, and the Son of man visibly to reappear."* Now, what is this but to state that the church is not now to expect or to long for the coming of her Lord? Brethren! was Peter wrong in urging us to "look for and haste unto the coming of the day of God?" 2 Pet. iii. 12. Was James wrong when he sustains the suffering saints by the assurance, "be patient, brethren, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh?" James v. 8. Was Paul wrong when he gave vent to the laborious eagerness of the whole suffering church of God? "We groan within ourselves, waiting for"-what? any time of relief on this side of the advent? No-but

^{* &}quot;Macdonald on the Revelation," p. 26. This quotation is made without any intended disrespect to the author. His mind only takes color from and exhibits the prevailing sentiment. We quote the extract merely as one among the many clear indications as to whither the church is tending; and that because, as we conceive, of the received notion respecting the kingdom.

waiting for "the adoption, to wit, the resurrection of the body," Rom. viii. 23. Paul's ardent longing overleaps every intervening event as unworthy of a thought, and hastens with fond hope to the time of the resurrection of the dead.

It is boldly affirmed by some, "This whole vision of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of Heaven is simply a figure, a type, or a symbol, denoting the conversion of the world." And following this lead, even ministers of the word are found, ready to profess themselves "satisfied that Christ will not appear yet for several thousand years."

But let any man submit the matter to his own test. Let him publicly warn the church to look for Christ's appearance—let him give sanction, as Paul does, to the warnings, the hopes, the duties of the gospel which he utters, by continually urging the people of God to look for the coming of Christ as an event that may arrive at any moment in the present generation, and he will soon discover how far such preaching

is palatable. He will be fortunate, indeed, if he escapes without the imputation of Millerism or madness.

Brethren! surely these things are not trifles. If it be true that the apostles in all their epistles represent this coming of Christ as the only really glorious object between them and the final redemption, surely we ought to stand in the same position. Our views of the millennium ought to clash with no such duty. We pray, "Thy kingdom come." If it be true that the beloved disciple, as he hears that closing sentence, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be"-drops his glowing pen, and with an ardor of faith and hope that overleaps every intervening obstacle, stretches out his treinbling, aged hands, and cries, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," Rev. xxii. 7, 20,-most assuredly, the church dare not, in her prayer, stop short of the same point. She dare not dissociate the advent from the long expected kingdom.

I confess, I see not how any man who

prays and labors for the kingdom of Christ upon earth, can regard this as a frivolous matter, sustained as it is, not by madmen nor heretics, but by men whose learning and piety and zeal, give them a praise in all the churches; and meeting us, as it does, with an array of scripture that the more and more astonishes if it does not convince.

Beloved brethren! Jesus is at great pains to instruct us unto the kingdom of heaven, in its various aspects. He says it is like "a grain of mustard seed." It is like "leaven"—it is like "a net cast into the sea;" and, lastly, it is like unto wheat gathered out from the tares which grew until the very harvest, "which is at the end of the world, and where the reapers are the angels." Matt. xiii. 1–52. He spent the forty days after his passion in instruction mainly upon this topic. Acts i. 3. Is it then an irrelevant question for him to ask us in this day of conflict and perplexity, "Have ye understood all these things?" (Note D.)

III. The third point regards the outward

means by which Christ's coming kingdom is to be finally established.

Here, too, is a difference—a difference not in minute details, which may be allowed, and which exists indeed on both sides, but a difference in the grand outline, upon which the advocates on either side are as unanimously agreed among themselves as they differ from the opposite party.

Let us keep strictly to the real points at issue. The question between us is not whether the gospel is to be preached—nor whether a preached gospel will not be always attended with a measure of success-nor whether the church is to prosecute her work through all the world, with all the prudence, foresight, energy, and patience of which she is capable. Nor is it either (we are constrained to add, notwithstanding the frequent insinuations to the contrary), whether men are to be renewed by the exhibition of signs and miracles without the power of the Holy Ghost. We have yet to learn the name of the evangelical christian teacher, who maintains this doctrine.

We return, then, to the question, "How is the kingdom to be introduced?"

One party insists that the simple preaching of the gospel is gradually and completely to expel the darkness and secure final and universal success. In some day when the gospel shall be proclaimed, it will not, as now, bring in only a part, but will convert every hearer. A new law of success is suddenly to arise, and the church is gradually, or towards the last perhaps, more rapidly, to be transfused into the millennial state.

Hence, on this side, the progress of science is hailed as, in its way, a pledge of success. The gentle rippling of the waters, and the fanning airs, prognosticate the approach of the "rushing mighty wind." The nineteenth century, with its astonishing improvements and its increased religious action, is greeted on every hand as the first streaks of the morning.

Missionary pleas are founded upon this persuasion. It is no uncommon announcement in the ears of the church,—"only exert yourself, only give sufficient means, and

the work is done." The simple fact that the gospel will thus be everywhere proclaimed, is to be the pledge of consequent universal triumph; not, indeed, as our Lord seems to intimate, Matt. xxiv. 14, as the harbinger of the "coming of the Son of man" to effect the work of salvation, but as the precursor of salvation to the ends of the earth without his personal presence.

The proof of this pervading sentiment meets us in almost every direction. Let us take a single example as an index of the church's feeling. Says one of our most stirring writers on missions,-"It is plain, not only that Christians come far short of doing what they can to save the heathen, but if they would come up to the measure of their duty, they might, under God, rescue the dying nations from their impending doom. * * God would not leave a bolt or a bar in their way, except what might be necessary to test their perseverance. * * Let every minister and every Christian do his duty, and the radiance of heavenly truth would be poured around the dying bed of every pagan; intelligence pour in to us from every quarter, not only of individuals, but of nations converted to God, and the shout of triumph would soon be heard, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord.'"*

Such, then, on one side, is the very general expectation.

On the other hand, it is affirmed, that the present generation of Christians, like all that have preceded it, is simply "a witness-bearing generation." This is the proper attitude of the church in her missionary work. "This gospel shall be preached as a witness among all nations, and then shall the end come."

As to the obligation of the church, these men rest it on the plain command of Christ, "Go into all nations and preach the gospel." This is enough. The church needs no additional stimulus. The assurance of entire, or even large success, does not enter at all into the obligation. They maintain that the church, in this day, is neither to

^{*} Dibble's "Thoughts on Missions," pp. 90, 91.

have nor to expect any other stimulative to do her manifest duty, than she has enjoyed in any previous century—none other than Paul had at Corinth, where God "had much people," but where many also perished;—none other, indeed, in her general missionary work, than any minister of the gospel has in his own parish, where to some "he is a savor of life unto life, and to others a savor of death unto death."

Further:—it is maintained on this side, that, instead of gradually increasing light, until "the latter-day" glory, the Scriptures everywhere hold up the idea that "darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples," Is. lx. 2. "God will hear his own elect that cry day and night unto him," "how long, O Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?"—and yet "when the Son of Man cometh, he shall hardly find faith on the earth." Luke xvii. 20–37, and xviii. 1–8; Ps. xciv. 3.

It is maintained, that, instead of increasing and complete success and comfort, "The

earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass, in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth; and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days they shall be visited." Is xxiv 20-22.

And finally, it is maintained, that when there shall be "upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth (for the powers of heaven shall be shaken), then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory: and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke xxi.25-28. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun

ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Is. xxiv. 23.

To sum up all;—it is maintained that the church is simply to obey Christ's command in prosecuting her missionary work. She is to leave results with him; she is to long for his personal interference; she is not to measure her obligation by her prospect of success; and, especially, she is to feed on no unwarrantable expectations.

These then, brethren, are three points of serious difference amongst the friends of missions. They come to us in an age when the church professes to be awake and putting on the "whole armor of God." Her helmet, "the hope of salvation," cannot be safely substituted by any mistaken counterfeit. These questions cannot now at least be held as mere theories. The times make them eminently practical. If it was safe to neglect them before, it is not safe now. She must aim to "know what is the hope of her calling, and what the exceeding riches of

God's inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when he raised *Him* from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places." Eph. i. 18–20.

Let me then, in the next place, advert to a few of the objections urged against weighing these questions:

1. This subject is often dismissed with the reply, that these things are after all unimportant.

What! not important to know whether Leighton was right in declaring, "They forget a main part of the church's glory who pray not daily for the conversion of the Jews." And if first in prayer why not first in labor? Not important to know exactly what we ought to mean when we cry, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that

burneth: and the Gentiles shall see thy light, and all kings thy glory. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married?" Is. lxii. 1-4.

Not important!—Brethren! Peter says to the Jews: "The heavens must receive Jesus until the times of the restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." Acts iii. 19-21. And the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, declares what the burden of this theme of all the holy prophets is. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David: as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began; that we should be saved

from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant: the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Luke i. 68-75. Is it not important to understand what all the prophets have agreed in speaking,-and to know, whether this restitution of all things, when "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, behold I make all things new," Rev. xxi. 5, be indeed "the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, and when the twelve also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel?" Matth. xix. 28.

Not important! Listen to this:

"And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Goo; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and

multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." Ez. xxxvii. 21-28.

Ought we not to be able to explain this wonderful and explicit promise?

These things not important! And yet Peter sums up the results of the great commission, and the whole success of the gospel among the nations, before Christ's coming, in these few words: "to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name." Acts xv. 14. James adds, from the prophets, that "After this God would return and build again the tabernacle of David which was broken down, and build again the ruins thereof and set it up: that the residue of men should seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles upon whom God's name is called." Acts xv. 16, 17. Paul confirms this by calling the same a pleroma or fulness of the Gen-

tiles, and assures us, that when this is fulfilled, the Jew is to be received again, and become as "life from the dead," Rom. xi. 15. Brethren! is it unimportant to know whether this will, indeed, be the extent of our present success, and whether, therefore, we are plying the church with unwarrantable motives on this point or not? Oh! let us not forget that solemn warning, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," Matth. v. 19.

We aim to be "scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." Now the church sitteth in her chariot, and we run to her and hear her reading the prophet Zechariah. We ask, Understandest thou what thou readest? and she replies:—How can I, except some one should guide me? The place of the Scripture which she reads is this:—"Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall build the temple of the Lord, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall

sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zech. vi. 12, 13 And the church answers, and says, "I pray you, of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" Brethren! is it unimportant to know whether and how "I shall begin at the same Scripture and preach unto her Jesus," as King as well as Priest upon His throne?

If these things are unimportant, what, I beseech you, is important?

2. Shall we relieve our consciences by the reply that the subject is too dark?

Grant it dark; but remember the promise;—at the time of the end, "many shall seek and shall find knowledge." Grant it dark; yet even respecting dark prophecies, can we blot out that declaration of God, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear this prophecy, for the time is at hand?" Rev. i. 3.

The prophecy of Israel's return from Babylon was a dark prophecy. But as the time

drew near, Daniel turned to the Scriptures, and "understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the desolations of Jerusalem," Dan. ix. 2. The prophecy respecting the first coming of Christ was a dark prophecy. But that did not hinder many from "running to and fro." "Knowledge had increased,"-and they "stood waiting for the consolation of Israel." Oh, brethren! is it only concerning His glorious coming "the second time without sin unto salvation," that all is so dark, that we hardly know whether we are to be "patiently waiting," under the assurance that "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry?" Heb. x. 37.

No, brethren! For what are we placed here, but to assure the church in an unbelieving age that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto her the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?"—what but to remind her that one who did not "taste of death until he saw the kingdom of God come

with power," testifies that he was an "eyewitness of his majesty. when he was with him in the holy mount?"—and to assure her that we have also a more sure word of prophecy, to the same end, unto which she will do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts?" 2 Pet. i. 16-19.

3. Shall we reply with many that these views are not practical, or that they are even injurious?

Not practical! Why, then, is so large a portion of God's word occupied with the direct discussion of them? Not practical! when every prayer for the kingdom has a different aspect, as you view the subject in one way or the other!

These views injurious! Come forward, then, thou man of God, and tell us why thou didst so solemnly warn the church that the "day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night," and then add, "seeing that all these things shall be dis-

solved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Tell us—why didst thou with piercing eye stand looking longingly for "the new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness?" and then when the holy vision was clear to faith, why didst thou cry, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless?" 2 Pet. iii. 10-14.

Ah! brethren, surely the apostles felt, that if the members of a church would "come behind in no gift," they must stand "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm them unto the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.

4. Shall we defend our neglect with the reply, that the proposed views have been so often coupled with fanatical extravagance? Shall we be frightened by the stigmatizing epithets of Chiliasts, and Fifth Monarchy Men, and Millerites?

But what important doctrine of God's word has not Satan caused to be caricatured,-and that, too, by a very slight addition? A little leaven was put in. It leavened the whole lump, and made many reject the mass with loathing. Has He not tried this successfully with the doctrines of justification by faith, of baptism, of repentance towards God? Every important doctrine of Scripture is a complete arch, and upon this arch the church is called to build her hopes. Now do we not know that when the light of Scripture is so clear and strong, that the adversary cannot sweep away the whole structure at a blow, his next step is to tempt the rash hand of some fanatic to wrest away a single stone, and the whole mass falls into confusion and ridicule? I pray you, let us not be scared away from investigation by this ancient wile of the devil.

There is one lesson, which, it is thought, the experience of the church might have taught us. It is this: Truth is vindicated from her discoloring and distortions, not by concealing her image, but by faithfully portraying her at full length. We discredit the caricature, only by producing the true likeness from the gallery of Scripture. Instead, then, of being alarmed into concealment, let the attempts of errorists rather urge us to preach the second coming of our Lord in its fulness, and our "tongues become as the pen of a ready writer, when we speak of the things which have been made touching the King." (Note E.)

Let us turn now to another view of the subject. Who are the men that urge these questions upon us?

Fathers and brethren! suffer me to appeal to you; I speak freely because I speak to you. Let me express my growing conviction that the church of Christ, in her missionary work, feels a pressing need of inquiring at this time and upon this subject. We are brought to a crisis. We must go forward or retreat. Every man who will take the pains to examine, feels the immense pressure of this difficulty, and this pressure is avoided only by inactivity. Against the

generally adopted theory on the one side, there is setting in a strong tide of influence upon the other.

Look at the state of the case. Our sister church of Scotland has taken decided ground on one at least of these points. She has done more. Her general assembly has "blessed God that His church in all its various branches has had her attention turned more earnestly to the predicted events of the latter times, and the circumstances connected with that second coming of their great head and Lord, which, whatever obscurity may hang over its details, should ever have been, and now more and more must ever be, in its grand outlines, THE POLE-STAR OF HER HOPE."

Further:—some of her best and most spiritual ministers are zealous propagators of them all. The most evangelical of the English ministry are leavened with the same doctrine. To say nothing of the glorious host that might be summoned from all past time, I see in these ranks, in our own day, such men as Duff, and McCheyne, and

the Bonars, and Brooks, and Bickersteth, and Candlish, with many others-and last, though not least, the great and good Chalmers. In his last days, and in his secret retirement, he suddenly catches the glorious dawn at least of the same truth, and his eye brightens with unwonted lustre, just before he sinks to rest. Take one passage among many: "This seeing eye to eye* makes for the personal reign of Him whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. God's restoration of the Jews will be an event to arouse the wonder of the whole earth; and it will be a leisurely, well-concerted movement under the guidance of One far more illustrious than the Ezras, or the Nehemiahs, or the Zerubbabels of the Old Testament—One, at whose appearance all the kings of the world will fall prostrate, and at length acknowledge his rightful title as 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.'"

These then are the men who demand our attention. Now these men come to me

^{* &}quot; Daily Scriptural Readings"-on Isaiah lii. 7.

with the bible in their hands. They invite investigation. They appeal continually to the word of God. Their arguments are remarkably calm, cautious, modest-in a word, just such as become a lover of the truth. They seem, at least, to kindle a light upon almost every page of the scriptures, to illustrate and enforce their views. Under their potent touch, sentences once unmeaning become resplendent with joy and comfort. Scripture expressions that have lain in the mind in an almost deathlike inanity, suddenly start up into life, and beauty, and cheerfulness. What was once a garden indeed, but a garden where the living trees were comparatively few and scattered, while all the rest was one chiselled landscape of joyless stone, - smiles into the well-watered garden of the Lord; every leaf waving in the breath of the Spirit, and every flower exhaling the goodly smell of Lebanon. Nor must I forbear to add, that, smile as we may at their conclusions, - once grapple with their arguments, and unless we are prepared with some strong rod wherewith to break the

chain of their reasonings, it is not easy "to resist the spirit and wisdom with which they speak."

Fathers and brethren! I ask you now candidly what shall I reply to these men?

Will it do to answer them by a sneer? Stop a moment. Let us hear the words of God!—" And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," Is. xxv. 6-9.

Now here, what is by all admitted to be

a description of the coming kingdom, are associated—the restoration of the Jews, and their land made a blessing to all nations—their rejoicing in the Messiah after long and "patient waiting"—and complete deliverance to all from every sorrow.

Let us now summon from the tomb an inspired witness to fix the point of time for this kingdom.

Paul! tell us; when shall these things be? You may hear his voice coming up from the depths of a martyred grave. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory!" 1 Cor. xv. 54.

Thou faithful servant of God! Let "thy flesh then rest," as did thy Lord's, "in hope,"—for as thou hast "known the fellowship of His sufferings," so shalt thou know "the power of His resurrection," and "attain unto the resurrection of the dead." "Blessed and holy is He that hath part in the first resurrection!" Thou hast no crown of

glory now—but "there is laid up for thee a crown of glory which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give thee in that day: and not to thee only, but also to all them that love His appearing." Return then unto thy sleep in Jesus!—and "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, thou shalt receive that crown of glory which fadeth not away"—for "thou hast suffered, and thou shalt also reign with Him"—and as "thou hast nobly overcome, thou shalt sit down with thy Lord upon His throne, even as He also overcame and is now seated with His Father upon His throne."

Brethren! you see whither we are brought,
—not by the "words which man's wisdom
teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth
—comparing things uttered by the Spirit with
things uttered by the Spirit." What can a
sneer effect in such a case as this?

Shall I administer to their reasonings, the usually recommended panacea, that such views betoken a carnal spirit?

But if it be not carnal to desire the

presence of the Bridegroom in glory in some extra-mundane locality, why is it carnal to desire His presence in glory upon this renewed earth? Mere locality, in this matter, is nothing. There is every element of spirituality in the latter case that can be really conceived in the former.

But come to facts. Leave the living out of the question. Hear such men as Rutherford, and Welsh, and Alleine, longing for the visible appearing of the Son of Man. Were they carnal? (Note F.) Think of "the most of the chief divines in the Westminster Assembly, not only Independents, but others, such as Twisse, Marshall, Palmer, and many more who are express Chiliasts." Were these men carnal?

Yonder are four martyrs in prison. They are—"these famous men: Mr. Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury; Mr. Ridley, bishop of London; that holy man Mr. Bradford; and I, old Hugh Latimer; who were imprisoned in the Tower of London for Christ's Gospel preaching; but where, to our great joy and comfort, we did together read over the

New Testament with great deliberation and painful study." One of them is writing a letter. It is "holy Mr. Bradford." He is relating to a friend, his own and "the cogitation of one who was my father in the Lord,"* respecting "the earnest expectation of the creature." Rom. viii. 19-23. He does it, moreover-" because this morning I had some knowledge more than I had before, that my life stood in great danger, and that even this week;" and hence "I thought good, my right dearly beloved in the Lord, to go about something which might be on my behalf a swan's song,† and towards you, both a monument of my love, and also a help, or at least an occasion for you to profit in that which I bear you record you most desire-I mean everlasting life, and the state thereof," Now step to his side and look over his shoulder as he writes,—"I therefore take the

^{*} Martin Bucer.

t "That is, which might be a special comfort to him, being then ready to be burned, as the swan's song is said to be sweetest a little before his death."—Letters of the Martyrs.

apostle to mean by 'every creature' simply, even the whole shape and creatures in the world," * * * * * * * and, "that as every thing and all things were made for man, so by the man Christ all and every thing, both earthly and heavenly, shall be restored." "These things will I think upon, these things will I pause upon; herein will I, as it were, drown myself; being careless of this point, I mean as to what parts of the world the Lord Christ will restore unto ME, or how He will do it, or what state or condition He will give it. It is enough, and enough for me, that I and all the world like me shall be much more happy than I ever can by any means conceive." * * "This renovation of all things the prophets seem to promise when they promise new heavens and a new "Therefore, methinks it is the duty of a godly mind to acknowledge, and thereof to glory in the Lord, that in our resurrection all things shall be repaired for eternity, as from our sin they were made subject to corruption."*

^{*} Bradford's Letters (83). Read the whole letter, and

Now, here were holy men who had no idea of any glorious kingdom before the second advent of our Lord, and were "they thereby carnal?"

No, brethren, I have tried this panacea, and I here unhesitatingly pronounce it a nostrum. (Note G.)

Shall I use against them what has been well termed "that mighty solvent," by which all the special promises to Israel are liquefied into confused and uncertain promises to the Church in general? Shall I make Jerusalem mean the Church, and Zion mean the Church, and Judah mean the Church, and Israel mean the Church, at my own will?

Well, I have tried this too. But the difficulty is that there are hard stones in this polished temple of God which the powers of this "mighty

note his quotation from Augustine. See also his fellowsufferer, Latimer's sermon on "The Day of Judgment," and his "Third Sermon on the Lord's Prayer." It would be hard to discover in these old witnesses for the truth, the expectation of a day of peace before Christ's advent, such as the Church now looks for. solvent" will not reach. Let any man cast in, for example, the sixty-first and following chapters of Isaiah, or the thirty-seventh and closing chapters of Ezekiel, and what will he have? A residuum, I grant you; a shapeless mass—"rudis, indigestaque moles,"—but not, I think, the symmetrical city of God, whose name is, "The Lord is there." (Note H.)

Can I put these men down by the too common, empty cry, that these views endanger the progress of missions?

But these men point to the fact that this view of the "coming and kingdom" is the very life of missions; since there is scarcely a duty enjoined in the whole gospel which is not enforced by the consideration of Christ's second coming. I say it unhesitatingly: This is emphatically the gospel motive, to both saint and sinner, and in every stage of their several conditions. Take a few examples:—

REPENTANCE.—"Repent ye, for the king-dom of Heaven is at hand." Mark i. 15.

"The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds." Jude 14, 15.

Sobriety and Hope.—" Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be wrought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 13.

COURAGE.—" Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke xii. 32.

Patience.—"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." James v. 7, 8.

DILIGENCE.—"We look for a new heaven and a new earth; let us therefore be diligent, that we be found of Him in peace." 2 Pet. iii. 14.

Meekness.—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. v. 5.

Comfort for the departed.—What was this comfort? Did Paul comfort the bereaved by the joyful fact that their sleeping friends were now in glory? Nay: but—"I

would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as those which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not go before them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

Such are a few examples. And these are not the "bright particular stars" in the galaxy. There are others, larger, and that shine with a more brilliant splendor.

No, brethren, this reply will not do. Why, even our missionaries themselves, to be emi-

nently successful with the heathen, must urge upon them the same arguments which made Paul so successful with the heathen of Thessalonica,—"to turn from dumb idols, and serve the living and true God: and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

Shall I reply by affirming that "our business is to preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified," and that "we may think so much of Christ's second coming as to forget the object of the first?"

True, this is plausible. It sounds well. In short, it might possibly relieve somewhat our difficulty, were it not for a single consideration, which I must present.

Two hundred years ago we received from the Westminster Assembly of Divines, that noble summary of doctrine, our "Confession of Faith." It is a precious legacy. But it is long, and not easily carried verbatim in the memory. Now their success has suggested this question—Could not some short compend

be found which should embrace all the prominent doctrines of the gospel, be easily carried in the memory, and which, if a man were surrounded, as was Titus, with the various forms of error, would meet and refute these errors by our simply carrying out its principles? Where shall we find such a compendium? I believe, brethren, that it will be in vain to look to human aid in such a task. We must turn to Him who is the author of the gospel, and who sees it at a glance in all its length and breadth. Hear, then, brethren, from the Holy Ghost, this summary of the gospel. It is contained in four short articles.

"For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us"—

Article first.—Of repentance. "To deny ungodly and worldly lusts"—

Article second.—Of holy living. "To live soberly, righteously, godly, in this present world"—

Article third.—Of the patience of faith and hope. "Looking for that blessed hope,

even the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour, Jesus Christ"—

Article fourth,—Of the atonement, and its results. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 12-15.

Brethren! you would not blot out, nor would you hide in your preaching the first, or the second, or the fourth; why then allow any theory to eclipse the third? Especially, shall we dare do this when the Holy Spirit immediately adds, with such solemn emphasis—"These things speak"—(whatever else you omit, or do not enlarge upon) "these things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Note I.)

Shall I meet them by throwing out one or two texts, wrested from their connexion, and then fold my arms in apathy on the whole subject?—or shall I propose one or two subtle difficulties as to details, and then turn away as if the matter were settled?

Brethren, this remedy can be tested only

by experience. Let me, however, testify that, when we have ceased objecting, and have actually gone in with these men into the temple of Scripture, and patiently listened to them, "persuading and testifying the things of the kingdom of God, both out of Moses and all the prophets, from morning until evening,"—it is not one or two displaced texts, nor one or two subtle objections that will relieve us. In such a case I will not say simply that you will be convinced. If your experience should tally with mine you will be overwhelmed with the multitude and aptness of their proofs from the word of God.

Beloved brethren! For one, I feel that our present policy will not answer. If these brethren are wrong, they must be met. They must be met at length. They must be met, not by occasional brief, unsatisfactory suggestions, but by fairly entering the lists. They must be met in a similar spirit to their own,—"searching the Scriptures daily whether these things are so." They must be met, in fine, with Scripture for

Scripture. Say, if you please, with some, that these are pernicious delusions of the devil. At least they seem to have God's word to rest upon. Even in such a case, then, ignorant contempt or haughty neglect will not serve. If we would vanquish in this contest we must copy our Master, and if the adversary is able to quote Scripture so adroitly, and argue "it is written," we must have the grace to reply "it is written again."

REVEREND FATHERS OF THIS SYNOD! Suffer a son to appeal to you. God has honored you with the respect of all his churches. Your piety, your learning, your steadfastness in the truth, your clear vindications of the doctrines of the gospel, confirm our regard. In the name of the Church of Christ I ask your guidance. Bear with me if I use this occasion to give vent to the long cherished desire of a perplexed heart that you should sedulously take the lead in this matter.

I ask you here, affectionately, What course shall we pursue? The call is upon us, and

the difficulty is pressing. When have we as a church taken decided ground on this subject? These questions are not only not irrelevant, but on the subject of missions are they not emphatically the questions at the present time? If Paul magnified his office as missionary to the Gentiles by pleading-not for the Gentile, but-for the Jew, why may not we give dignity to our missions in the same way? If men were "fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, that Christ was first to suffer"—is there no danger that men now should be "fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken concerning the glory" into which he is to enter? If the former was metaphorized away by the Jew, why may not the latter be metaphorized away by the Gentile? Take out the doctrines, "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,"-which are confessedly the most important, because they are the life of the soul--and what doctrines, after these, lay a higher claim to the fairest and fullest discussion than those which affect the

publication of the gospel, and the circumstances of Christ's coming kingdom? Tell me, I beseech you, how I may expect any such kingdom, before the advent of our Lord, and yet look and wish for that advent continually? If that kingdom is not to appear until his advent, tell me further, how is it that the Scriptures so continually associate that kingdom with this earth, if it is to be withdrawn to some other point in the universe?

Reverend Fathers, it is with no ordinary emotions that I plead with you to teach us not only to pray, but to pray with understanding, "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Beloved Brethren of the Synod! I appeal to you. Has not this matter been left long enough in abeyance? Will not the time past suffice for associating these views with the dreams of folly, when we cannot meet the formidable array of Scripture testimony brought against us? Is it not time for us to know whether, in any, and in what point,

our prevailing theory of missions at this day is defective? Shall this subject always be repelled as frivolous? Shall we never meet it as we would meet any other alleged doctrine of Scripture? Surely, on the theme which oftenest occupied the pen of Moses, and the harp of David and of all the prophets since the world began,—when the church beseeches us, "Read me this, I pray you"—we are not at liberty to reply "I cannot, for I am not learned."

Let me affectionately ask you, why should this particular subject be proscribed? The church has fought through and maintained, inch by inch, from the word of God, the doctrine of the prophetical office of the Lord, and she has been strengthened ever since by the conflict. She has dragged up from oblivion, and maintained hand to hand, in the sixteenth century, the priesthood of her crucified and interceding Saviour; and every nerve and muscle has been strung with new vigor ever since. Why, then, is the kingly office of her Head,—that significant title, "King of Kings, and

Lord of Lords,"—to be esteemed of so little value that she can be at almost no pains to understand what the word of God really means by it?

Beloved brethren! I ask for no rash decisions. But I do ask, I do entreat, I do supplicate that these things be no longer treated with contempt; but that whatever of critical talent God has given to his church should be brought to guide the church in her present path. When I rise up before the flock which Christ has given me to feed, am I-oh! an I, by any theory, cherishing in them unfounded expectations? Am I shutting out from their eyes and their hearts that "blessed hope, the glorious appearing of their Saviour?" Am I practically urging them to repose-instead of "watching for their Lord, whether he come at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning, lest, coming suddenly, he find them sleeping?" Am I beguiling them into the expectation of increasing light and prosperity and religion through the earth-instead of warning them to "watch, therefore, and pray always, that

they may be accounted worthy to escape all those things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man?"

These, brethren, are serious questions to the men who are "appointed to give meat to His household in due season." "Blessed are we if our Lord when he cometh shall find us so doing." Surely, then, you will esteem it no needless plea if I put up the imploring prayer, for you and for me, that it may be "given unto us to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." Mark iv. 11.

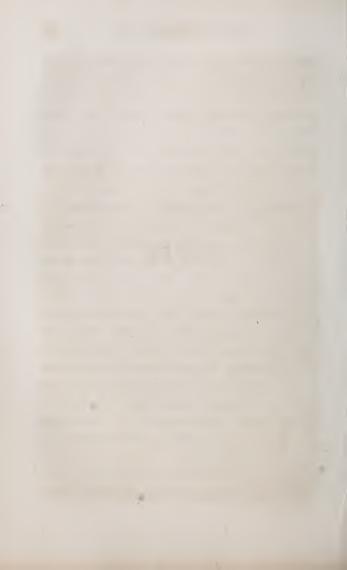
Brethren! "The Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ."—For "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also that pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."—But "When ye see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."—For, "Behold I saw in the night visions, and one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to

the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him: and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed" -"and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."-" In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted, and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever."-"And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from

their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL!"

Lord Jesus! Oh! hasten thy glorious coming! Take away the light of this present world, that the whole earth may be lightened with thy glory! Let the pillar of the cloud, where thou art invisible, redden into the pillar of fire by the lightnings of thy revealed presence; that thy whole church may rest glorious in the light of thy countenance! "There we shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God shall give us light, even the Lamb shall be the light thereof!" "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Amen.

NOTES.



NOTES.

THERE are a few ready objections against the views set forth in the preceding discourse, which are usually proposed at the outset as a sufficient reason for discarding any further examination of the subject. But we cannot perceive that the matter is to be disposed of so easily. We have endeavored to consider these objections honestly. The result is, that to our mind these objections are either founded on a misconception of millenarian views ;--or they assume a meaning for certain scripture terms, which the Scriptures themselves do not warrant; -or upon examination, they are found to be beside the point. The object of the following notes is to show that this remark is true.

Nоте A, р. 32.

It is often insinuated as a decisive objec-

tion that "there is all the difference between the views here presented and the truth, that there is between Judaism and Christianity." It is asked with some asperity—"Shall we go back to Judaism?"

This seems like an attempt to answer the argument by a slur. The apostles had so much trouble with the false teachers among the Jews, that the opinion has become current that every doctrine held by the Jews, or advocated by them, was either wrong in itself, or else was a very low and unspiritual form of the true doctrine. Hence, to receive any truth as the believers before Christ received it, is considered as retrograding. This is called Judaizing. And to Judaize, in anything, is thought to be another scriptural term for returning to "weak and beggarly elements."

But we think that this wholesale condemnation is by no means supported by the scriptures. There were *some* things in which the Jews of the apostles' time were plainly wrong—and wrong by forgetting to "search their own scriptures;" and hence—

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failing to perceive that the apostles taught "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should comethat Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead. and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Acts xxvi. 22, 23. Luke xxiv. 44-48. But there were far more things in which the Jews were as plainly right-and right, because they "believed the things which are written in the law and in the prophets." For example-"They had hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust; which they themselves also allowed." Acts xxiv. 14, 15. According to the scriptures, then, to receive a doctrine as it was generally received by the Jews before Christ, by no means necessarily proved that doctrine as so received to be either wrong or incomplete.

Now, with regard to the particular doctrines advocated by the discourse, we cannot perceive the fairness of the reproach. We do not Judaize in a bad sense. Let us look at the case. There are two forms of

error mentioned in the scriptures, with which the term Judaism is associated in a bad sense. The first is the Jewish denial that "Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God." 1 John i. 22,-v. 1. But does any one really believe the doctrines set forth by us as chargeable with this heresy? The other is the early attempt of the "believing Pharisees," and others, to maintain that the blood of Christ was not of itself sufficient for salvation; and, therefore, that "it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." In other words, the Gentiles must become outwardly Jews, or "they could not be saved." Acts xv. 1-5. But here, again, we cannot believe that our brethren would seriously charge us with denying that the "blood of Christ cleanses from all sin."

The slur attached to the name, then, being removed from us, we may now return and ask—how does the fact that the doctrines we have advocated were received by the Jews before Christ, necessarily prove that they are wrong? For what, after all,

is the faith of true Judaism but the faith of Christianity?—such Judaism, for example, as Moses had—such as David had—such as Paul clung to even after his conversion—saying, "hath God cast away his people? God forbid! for I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin"—such, indeed, as Jesus himself had, who was a Jew to the last; yea, and to the last proclaims his royal Jewish descent—saying, "I am the root and the affspring of David."

NOTES.

We must protest against this too common division of the children of faith, before and after Christ, into two antagonistic bands. The church is one and her faith is one.

There were shadows, indeed, in the Jewish ritual which pointed to the substance—Christ. But the truth itself, which was taught by both the shadow and the substance, was certainly the same. A Jew would have been carnal, whether before or after Christ, to rest in the shadow, and to suppose that the "blood of bulls or goats could take away sin"—or "make the comers thereunto perfect;"—or that the mere obser-

vance of outward ceremonies could make reconciliation. There were, indeed, many such men in our Lord's time. But yet the faith of the true worshipper before Christ and of the worshipper after Christ-at the altar or at the cross-apprehended the same great truth—"Lo I come." The same was true of all the other prominent doctrines. In other words, we suppose that the faith of Moses was throughout very much the same thing as the faith of Paul. The various articles of the covenant, whether spiritual or strictly national—whether common to all the spiritual seed of Abraham, or confined to those who "were of the circumcision, and who also walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham," Rom. iv. 12,—were the same, so far as they were perceived, in the view of the lawgiver and of the apostle. To deny this principle, would be, we think, to destroy the consistency of the word of God. It would be to make the promises mean one thing one day and a very different thing the next.

We certainly need remind no one of

Paul's declaration, that the blessings of christianity are all involved in the promise made to Abraham: or again-that "we are built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself" underlying вотн as "the chief corner-stone:" or again-that "in Him all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." These are trite truths. Surely, then, if of old there were special promises made to believing Jews as Jews, respecting the kingdom of God upon earth, these are not done away in Christ, but rather confirmed. For "Jesus Christ was the minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"—as well as "that the Gentiles also might glorify God for his mercy." Rom. xv. 8, 9. Jesus Christ, then, had a two-fold office; first-to confirm all the promises made to the believing Jew ("whose are the fathers") as such, whatever they might be; and, secondly—to open the door of entrance unto the blessings of salvation, to the Gentile, who was before excluded from any participation whatsoever.

Why, then, if God has made "Israel his first-born"—and among the various blessings of the covenant has assigned to Israel some "gifts and a calling" which were to be peculiar to him—should a man be stigmatized as a Judaizer for insisting on the first-born's covenanted national privileges?

But it is still argued—"the middle wall of partition is broken down." Very well, so it is, and what then? "Why, we Gentiles, who before were shut out, are come into the church with the Jews." Agreed-for so Paul declares, "We are now of the household of God"-what more? "Why, we Gentiles, whose Christ was not and who had no hope, may now, as well as the Jew, call Christ ours, and rejoice with the Jew in a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Agreed again—for we, who were "without Christ and had no hope," are now made partakers of bothwhat more? "Why, we, with the Jew, compose but one church, the one body of Christ." Still agreed—for he hath "of twain made one new man, so making peacewhat more? "Why, the Jew has now no privileges whatever in which the Gentiles may not equally with him participate. The national distinction is for ever abolished." No, there we demur; the inference is not just. For that assertion would include-not only "the blessings in heavenly places in which we are made to sit together in Christ Jesus;" but, also—an equal participation by Jews and Gentiles in all the arrangements of God for carrying forward and establishing his kingdom upon earth and during its continuance. Now, this latter, the scriptures, we think, plainly deny. They always assign to the Jew a pre-eminence in this respect. It is a part of the national covenant. They do so as regards the past, the present, and the future. As to the past (before Christ) we are all agreed. As to the present (under the gospel) Paul declares that the "Jew has much advantage every way." He says explicitly, that the gospel comes as "the wisdom of God and the power of God to every one," indeed, "that believeth"-but yet "to the Jew first." And as to the future—we are

really at a loss to know how any one can be indifferent to the multitude of promises in which God predicts the marked pre-eminence of the Jewish people in bringing on the final establishment of His kingdom upon earth, and during its continuance. It is of the Jew that God says expressly—concerning the future, "when they shall build the old wastes,"-that "ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you Ministers of our God: for your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore their land shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them. . . And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Is ch xl., xli., and xlii. Read the whole passage through, and see what a prominence is given to the Jewish people. And this is but a sample of almost numberless texts to the same point.

Whatever annulling, then, there may be of

all distinction between Jews and Gentiles brought in under the gospel, when they shall be "glorified together with Christ" (and of this we do not pretend to speak)—yet, as to the point which concerns us—viz. the continued distinction between Jew and Gentile on the earth, and the pre-eminence which is assigned to the former throughout the whole economy of God respecting His church on earth—we think that the Scriptures are very explicit. Nor can we deem it to be "beggarly" Judaizing to uphold the same view of the case.

We may add here, that if to put the Jew first be heretical Judaizing, then was our own Calvin a "ringleader of the sect." We have already referred to his opinion on this subject. But let him be heard at length. On Acts xiii. 46—"It was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to you,"—he thus holds forth:—"He charges them (the Jews) with ingratitude, because they, whom God had chosen above all people, when Christ offered himself to them, malignantly rejected so signal a favor. In the

former clause he refers to the height of honor and preferment to which God has raised them. Then follows the reproof, because they had willingly spurned such a favor. Hence he concludes that the time was now arrived when the Gospel should be carried to the Gentiles. With regard to his saying it was necessary to preach to them first, he properly has reference to the time of Christ's kingdom. For, under the law, before the manifestation of Christ, the Jews were not only first, but alone. Moses therefore called them a "kingdom of priests," and God's inherit-But the adoption of God rested at that time among them alone, to the passing by of the Gentiles, with this understanding, that upon the advent of Christ they should still be preferred to the Gentiles. For although Christ reconciled the world unto the Father, yet those who were already near to God, and of his family, were the first in order. This, then, was the legitimate orderthat the apostles should gather the Church first from among the Jews, then from among the Gentiles; as was seen in chapter first

and other places. The fellowship of the Gentiles was not to deprive the Jews of their right of primogeniture, that they should EVER cease to be pre-eminent in the Church of God. For this same reason it is that Paul says, that the righteousness of God in the gospel was to be manifested first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles."

Nоте B, р. 36.

We have endeavored to show the insuperable difficulty which attends the expectation of "the kingdom" before the second advent of Christ. The argument is, that such an expectation withdraws the faith, and prayer, and hope of the Church from the coming of her Lord, and fixes it upon something which is to precede that event; and that this contravenes the whole burden of Scripture exhortation on the subject. We conclude, therefore, that the advent of Christ is to be premillennial and not postmillennial.

Some of our brethren, however, have resorted to what they call a third view of the 108 NOTES.

millennium. According to this view the promises respecting the kingdom are to be somehow fulfilled before and somehow fulfilled after the advent of our Lord. There is to be a state of general felicity beforehand, but yet the duration and extent to which piety shall prevail are left undetermined. The promises are to receive a sort of fulfilment before Christ's coming, and yet perhaps not an adequate fulfilment.

We do not know that we succeed in presenting this third view clearly. To say the truth, turn it which way we will, it appears to us not a little misty. To declare that the advent is to be premillennial is clear enough. To declare that the advent is postmillennial is clear enough. But to hang between the two involves the subject in obscurity. To say that "the kingdom" is to be somehow set up before the advent, and yet somehow after the advent, does really seem to be only taking refuge in ambiguity.

So far, however, as this third view is tangible, it does not appear to us, upon reflection, to differ essentially, as to the argument, from the second. In other words, there is really no third view. There is no middle ground. Let us look at the case.

The point properly at issue may be stated thus: Here are "exceeding great and precious promises" respecting "the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," scattered through the word of God. These are called millennial promises. We need not stop to prove that they have never yet, to the satisfaction of the church in general, been even faintly fulfilled. We all look for their certain accomplishment. They are strictly associated with this earth. They exhibit a universality and a completeness of holiness, such as language could not more explicitly declare. Some of them also certainly intimate a considerable lapse of time. Furthermore: -- We may leave out of the number, if it be desired, the celebrated passage in the 20th chapter of the Revelations. Or-if the word millennium is regarded as objectionable, we may omit that also. It is not the name, but the thing at which we aim. Now we argue thus: Whether every soul is

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to be converted, or whether the predicted glorious state of the earth is to last a full thousand years or not, is not just now material. Here lies the point. Take these promises as they stand; and, in any view of the case, a result which will justify such expressions—as, for example, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," and other kindred passages-may well be considered as an object upon which the faith and hope of the church may rest, as on a bright spot that is not to be all night, as now, but on the contrary a state which might satisfy her most ardent aspirations. If, then, this fulfilment is to take place before the coming of her Lord, she is manifestly wrong if she presents that coming (as the Scriptures certainly do) as the first dawn of glory and hope to the world. She is manifestly wrong if her faith continually overleaps such promised blessings, and groans (as the Scripture writers certainly do) for deliverance from them into something to come afterwards. Indeed, the feeling of the church has ever proved that

she regards the fulfilment of the promises respecting the "latter-day" glory (whenever that might occur), as the event capable of satisfying her most intense longings. The cry on all sides has ever been—"Oh! for the fulfilment of the promises!"—How long, Lord!"—"The kingdom predicted!—the kingdom! let it come!"

The single question then which we would ask is this:—Is it meant by this third view that the fulfilment of these Scripture promises is to take place before the coming of Christ or after it? If the reply be—"before His coming:—these promises are first to receive a suitable fulfilment;"—then we ask, is not this virtually the same with the second view? In both cases the advent is postponed. The coming of Christ is not the first object of prayer and hope. The only escape from this, which we can see, is, to leave the matter so vague and indefinite, that we know not what to believe respecting the kingdom, or what to hope for.

If, on the other hand, the reply is—" after His coming"—then the first and the third

views coincide here. We stand on the same ground as to this point. The premillennial advent is really admitted. The only question which now divides us is the question of locality. Will this fulfilment of the promises take place on this earth or elsewhere? We are agreed—when we pray, "Thy kingdom come,"—to associate the advent of Christ and the kingdom together. Our only question now is—when we add, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"—do we mean that this is to occur on this earth or in some far off locality? But this is an independent question, and must be discussed by itself.

We repeat, then, that as to the question before us, there is really no middle ground. The advent is to be either premillennial or postmillennial, and on the one side or the other we must take our stand.

Supposing, however, that we agree as to the premillennial advent, and that we are divided only on the question of the *locality* of the kingdom, we have now a remark or two respecting these separate questions. NOTES. 113

- 1. In the first place, we are free to say, for ourselves, that this preliminary question of the advent being thus settled, the way to the decision of the other seems short and easy. It is difficult to perceive how a man can admit a premillennial advent and a subsequent kingdom such as the Scriptures promise, and yet deny that that kingdom is to exist upon earth—or, as a consequence, the personal reign. Yet we do not press this upon our brethren.
- 2. In the next place, we as frankly confess, on the other hand, that we consider this preliminary question as, just now, by far the more important of the two. It is this general anticipation of the kingdom before the advent which is shutting out from the church the expectation and the earnest desire for Christ's appearing. Here lies the great mischief. So truly are we convinced of this, that—could the church in our land be brought back to the point of expecting no glory until the second coming of Christ, and so return again to the habit of looking, and longing, and praying for that coming as the dawn of

her "redemption"—could her ministers again be brought, constantly to press home every duty by the motives derived from that advent—we do not know that we should be very earnest to say a word more. At any rate a great advance in the right direction would be gained. Once admit the kingdom to be subsequent to the advent, and we believe that God's blessing—with the present increasing attention that is bestowed upon the prophetical Scriptures—would soon lead us to proper and quite unanimous views respecting the nature of the kingdom itself.

3. In the third place we must object to the very common mode of arguing by confounding these two independent questions together. You contend with a man that Christ's coming is to be premillennial. He replies by running on to what he considers the absurdities of the personal reign. But this will not do. It confuses things. It prevents progress. Let us settle one point at a time. You expect a coming kingdom? "Yes." You expect Christ's advent also? "Yes." Now let the question of locality

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and nature stand by. Will Christ's coming take place before or after the kingdom? Settle this first, from the Scriptures, and the way is then open for the other. "But the one follows certainly upon the other." Very well, be it so. Yet to attain to the truth we must take one step at a time. You maintain that Christ's advent will be postmillennial? Now prove it upon its own grounds. Let this be done, and the personal reign will be easily disposed of.

4. One remark more. The position has lately been taken—that we cannot decide whether Christ is to come before or after the promised kingdom. It is said—"Let us adopt neither view, for who can tell?" Now, not to be tedious—we may ask in a word, what is this but to say that the church, in praying and longing for Christ's advent (as the Scripture writers certainly do), does not know whether she is doing right or wrong? What if the kingdom is to come beforehand? She may then be praying and longing for the utter extinction of a time of glory which fulfils the promises, and which ought to

secure her most ardent labors and her most joyful anticipations.

But unite the advent and the kingdom together, and all is plain.

Note C, р. 43.

The advent and the kingdom are so manifestly connected in the Scriptures, that some cannot shut their eyes to this fact. What, then, is to be done?—for they must still have a "latter day" glory before the personal advent.

The difficulty is solved thus. Make the coming, spoken of in connexion with the kingdom, mean not a personal but a spiritual one. This answers the purpose. And so, volume after volume appears, in which, by this vague accommodation of Scripture terms, the Church is actually taught and made to believe that—in praying for Christ's advent—she is not praying for his personal appearing at all, but simply for the outpouring of his Spirit. This is so common that we have but to turn to almost any popular work on the subject of the kingdom of Christ, to find

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examples. We have pointed in another place to the ruinous consequences which are threatening the Church from this principle. We wish, however, here to ask one or two questions further.

1. In the first place.—Is not this at least an unwise evasion of a difficulty? The problem is, to place the Church in this day, in her prayer for the kingdom, upon the same ground with the prophets, apostles, and the Church of the New Testament. Now let the question be fairly asked. -When the apostle John prays-"Even so come Lord Jesus,"-does he refer to the personal, visible return of Christ, or not? Let any man examine the immediate context, and hear Christ declare-"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be"-and then judge. When Paul bade the Thessalonians "wait for God's Son from heaven,"-did he mean that they should wait for the descent of the Holy Spirit into their hearts or throughout the world-or did he mean the return of Jesus Christ from heaven? And so we might go on through all the numerous plain passages in which this subject is alluded to? Well, then, if this be so—we ask, with real concern—how can we, for the sake of sustaining any theory of missions, satisfy ourselves for leading the Church of God to pray for one thing, while the apostles and their Churches were taught to pray for another?

2. We cannot but wonder at the mode of reasoning by which this favorite explanation is attained. The first step is to lay it down as a fixed principle, that Christ's reign must be only a spiritual one. This cannot be given up on any ground. Then, as to the coming spoken of in connexion with the reign, why, of course this must be spiritual too. To be sure there is no resort to the context to sift out the real meaning of the phrases in question there. No, our theory provides for all. The kingdom is certainly only spiritual, and hence the coming must be spiritual also. Now we submit whether it would not be much better, first, to settle the meaning of those words, παρουσία

and ἐπιφανεία,* by the different contexts? What did the Holy Ghost mean by them? It certainly would be wiser for us to modify our theory by the mind of the Spirit, than to modify the mind of the Spirit by our theory.

3. We would ask then in the third place-Do the Scriptures plainly use that very frequent phrase, "the coming of Christ," as meaning either death or the outpouring of his Spirit? The question is not whether the outpouring of the Spirit may accompany Christ's personal coming-but is that the meaning of the coming itself? Christ's ascension into heaven was followed by the gift of the Spirit. But what would be thought of us if we should use the terms-"Christ's ascension" and the "outpouring of the Holy Spirit"—as equivalent? Why then should "His coming again in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven," be confounded with the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

^{*} For the English reader we translate—" presence" and "appearing."

Note D, p. 48.

It is guite usual to consider this whole subject triumphantly settled by the announcement of some text in which the kingdom of heaven signifies the rule of Christ in the heart.—" Does not Christ expressly say 'The kingdom of heaven is within you?' Does not Paul declare positively that 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, bnt righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" "-We reply, assuredly they do; but who denies this? Does anybody doubt, that among the various collateral meanings of the phrase in the Scriptures, this is one meaning? But what has this to do with the point in hand? We are not speaking of the inward, but of the outward kingdom of God;of which, however, the universal prevalence of the inward is to be one feature. God everywhere declares, indeed, that one characteristic of that coming kingdom will behis having "written his laws upon men's hearts." All its citizens are "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." This NOTES. 121

is insisted on throughout the Scriptures. But still we ask, what has this to do with the question in hand? We are speaking of the visible manifestation of the kingdom. Is there no question as to the time and circumstances of this, because we admit the inward reign of grace? Take our brethren's own view. Look forward to their expected heaven after the judgment. There the kingdom will be in every heart. But certainly there will be also an outward manifestation of the reign of Christ, visible to all.

There is one main idea which the Scriptures assign to the phrase—"the kingdom of God,"—"the kingdom to come," &c. Take some examples:—"Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."—Christ "shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom."—"The angels shall come forth and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity."—"When ye see all these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand;" &c., &c. Certainly the meaning

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here is not grace in the heart. Take also the multitude of texts, in the prophets and elsewhere, which describe the kingdom without specifying its name.

Now the plain question is-Will the kingdom in this sense arrive before the coming of Christ or after it?-and if after it, what will be the characteristics of that kingdom, not only in one particular, but in all its main particulars? What does it avail, then, to the settlement of these questions, to tell us that the kingdom of God sometimes means the reign of grace in the heart. True; but this is not the meaning of the phrase here; nor is it the prominent meaning of the phrase as used throughout the Scriptures. And yet there seems to be no end to this manner of reply. Just reverse the case. Suppose we should argue that there could be no reign of God's Spirit in the heart, because it is promised that "the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High?" In other

words, there can be no *inward* reign because there is to be an *outward* one. But wherein is the opposite deduction the wiser?

Note E, p. 67.

It would not be difficult to refer to whole discourses which seem to be alarmed into a suppression of part of the truth by the abuses of errorists. Now, so far as these discourses protest against fixing the time of our Lord's advent, we concur with them. Just there has been the usual error of fanaticism. When they proceed to warn the church that she can be prepared for the coming of her Lord, only by preparation of the heart and the daily fulfilment of her duties, we still rejoice in the declaration of such sound views. But when these discourses go on to supplant the duty of watching by the duty of "working while the day lasts," and to insinuate that thus our entire obligation will be fulfilled, we must object. Why should these duties be thought to clash? The same apostle who reminds the Thessalonians no less than five

times of the coming of the Lord—also exhorts them "to study to be quiet, and to do their own business." Jesus also declares that servant "blessed, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing." Watch and labor. We conceive these duties as perfectly consistent. Neither is to supplant the other. Neither can be dispensed with. Indeed they are reciprocal aids. We are most likely to be watching for the Lord when we are most laborious, knowing that "we must render an account." And conversely-we are most likely to be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," when—under the blessed hope of the coming of Christ, and the glorious resurrection—we are assured that "our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Another remark. There is the greatest difference between the confident expectation that the advent of Christ will take place at an ascertained time, and so preparing for it;—and the command of our Lord to watch for it, as an event which may come, and for which we are to stand in a waiting attitude.

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His illustration of the porter, waking throughout the successive watches of the night, is exact. In the former case, all is bustle, and confusion, and misdirected labor, before the stated time arrives; and subsequent disappointment begets listlessness and often infidelity. In the latter case, every duty is fulfilled with calm composure; -- and then, though centuries of patient waiting may have passed, and three watches of the night be gone; hope is never disposed to sneer out-"where is the promise of His coming, for all things continue as they were?"—but still longs and waits, and is ready at a moment's warning, with her filled, and trimmed, and burning lamp, to go forth and meet the Bridegroom.

Is not this a sufficient answer also to the frequent objection that "the apostles, after all, never expected the coming of Christ as impending?" No, they did not. They always taught the church that it was near, never that it was imminent (ἐγγὺς and ἤγγικς, not ἐνέσληκεν—except in 2 Thess. ii. 2, where

the unwarrantable alarm is rebuked). Watch for the sun's rising! But that is very different from crying—Behold the first streaks of the morning! Our Lord makes the same distinction. We are not to be alarmed when they cry, "Lo, here is Christ;" or, "Lo, He is there." "When they say, 'Behold He is in the desert,' go not forth; or, 'in the secret chambers,' believe it not." But why? Is it because His coming is not to be looked for and waited for? Nay; but because—"as the lightning shineth out of the east, even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be:"—sudden, rapid, and "every eye shall see Him."

We refer the reader, on this important distinction, to the 9th chapter of the Rev. A. Bonar's volume, mentioned below, where the above reasoning is presented at length. Indeed, the whole book will well repay a perusal; particularly as a reply to the arguments of the Rev. Mr. Brown in his late work on "The Second Advent."

Note F, p. 74.

We must confess ourselves shocked at the indifference with which many allow themselves to speak in regard to the return and personal presence of our Lord. We could wish these brethren just to look—for example, into the opening chapters of the Rev. Andrew Bonar's "Redemption Drawing Nigh"—to see "what our fathers felt regarding the second coming of Christ." Some of these were men too who had no settled opinion respecting the subsequent establishment of the kingdom upon the earth. There was one point, however, fixed in their minds. This was, that the first dawn of hope for the world would be the appearance of Christ.

In this connexion we may refer to the method of decrying this longing for the return of Christ, under the plea that this is to undervalue the inward presence of the Holy Spirit. "We are under the ministration of the Spirit; and why wish this suspended, to gain Christ's personal presence—had not the unbe-

lieving Jews this latter? The ministration of the Spirit is better for us than the carnal presence of Christ." Such, if we understand him, is the meaning of the respected author* of the discourse on "The Ministration of the Spirit." We select the words of this "brother beloved," for the very reason that they show how we are misinterpreted by those whom we most esteem for their piety and faithfulness; and whose censure is therefore the more difficult to bear.

"If I read the Bible aright," says he, "the only throne which the Redeemer is ever to set up on earth, is a throne in the heart. What, if the incarnate Son of God should descend from heaven and take up his abode among men, would this be better for a dying world than the ministration of the Spirit?

* * * I can never be unmindful of the divinely attested fact, that we have already a gift which is far more valuable than the personal presence of the Saviour could possibly be. * * * For the world I would

^{*} Rev. Dr. Magie of Elizabethtown.—See Nat. Preacher for Jan. 1845.

not turn off the eyes of men from the ministration of the Spirit to any theory more palpable, or visible, or externally impressive. Living as we do in the midst of the Spirit's reign, * * * what can we wish or wait for more? It is altogether a retrograde movement to be talking now of a revisible throne and an imposing ritual. It is enough for me to have the sceptre of the blessed Jesus swayed over my affections." Such is the frequent strain of sermons on this topic. Verbal objections to the same effect are not unusual.

Now, with all due kindness, we say that this is entirely to misstate the point at issue. The question is not, whether the bodily presence of the Bridegroom—even as a glorious King—without His Spirit, is better than His Spirit's inward teachings without His bodily presence. We know of no millenarian who avows that the unbelieving Jew of Christ's day was better off than is the humble believer in our own. But this is the question. Granting that the Spirit is already possessed: is not the Bridegroom's presence

better than the Bridegroom's absence? Our brethren seem continually to forget, when talking in this strain, that God proclaims it over and over, as a universal feature on the return of the King and the setting up of the kingdom, that his law shall be written upon every heart. What is this but the vivifying influence of the Holy Ghost on the soul?

Another remark. One would think that the very name applied to the blessed Spirit in this very connexion, would have satisfied these brethren that their undervaluing Christ's personal presence is wrong. The Holy Ghost is there called the *Comforter*. But who wants comfort but the mourner? And wherefore are we mourners? Christ tells us. Because he hath *left* us, therefore "sorrow has filled our hearts." We mourn "because the Bridegroom is taken away from us." Surely, then, his *return* is greatly to be desired.

But turn to the passage itself (John xiv.—xvii.), and read it through, and see if the following truths are not clearly taught.

1st. That on Christ's leaving the world, the

rich gifts of the Spirit were secured and poured forth.—"If I go not away the Comforter will not come to you, but if I go away I will send him to you." Hence "it was expedient" that he should go to the Father.

2dly. That Christ's return is not to dispense with the Spirit's presence, as our brethren seem to insinuate against us.—"I will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, that he may abide with you for EVER." Christ's return, then, does not take away the Spirit's presence; it only superadds his own.

3dly. That one of the Spirit's present offices is to sustain the soul of the believer under the privation of Christ's presence.

4thly. That Christ guarantees, in this very connexion, that the Spirit's presence is not all that is to be expected: for he adds in the next verse, "I will not leave you comfortless (orphans), I will come to you." And again, "Do you inquire of that I said, a little while and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while and ye shall see me, and because I go unto the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall weep and lament, but the

world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; and ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Could words say more plainly that the gracious presence of the blessed Spirit detracts nothing from the desirableness of our Lord's return? We cannot cease from wondering, therefore, that our brethren allow themselves to use such language as we have quoted.

Note G, p. 77.

When the charge of carnality has been fairly sifted, it is difficult to detect the ground of this frequent reproach cast upon the earnest desire for our Lord's return, and especially upon the doctrine of His continued personal presence with the redeemed on this earth. We really cannot feel the force of the objection. After due deliberation upon the various statements to this effect, the conclusion seems irresistible, that the whole charge is referable to the

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mere change of place. For the glorious kingdom to be far off, is spiritual—but to set it up here makes it carnal. But how can mere locality produce such an effect?

There seems to be an impression that any association of Christ and His glorified saints with this earth is degrading to them. The earth has so long been the scene of corruption, and sin, and disorder, that there is an anxiety to get as far as possible away from it. Some seem unable to conceive how it can ever become a fit place for the scenes which are to follow the resurrection of the dead. But these objections leave out of view that it is to be a renovated earth. "There shall be no more curse."-" He that sitteth upon the throne says, Behold I make all things new."— Such is to be the glorious condition of the "new heavens and the new earth," that the "former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." As to mere locality then, why may not this earth be rendered by God as suitable a place for the "kingdom of His Son" as any other? What is there in this material earth that is of itself corrupting to a holy nature, or that puts it out of the power of God so to change and adorn the earth as becomes the residence of His holy people?

But this objection is so common that we must be indulged in a few remarks further:

1. Take this earth even in its present state, under the curse. What power has association with it to destroy the spirituality of a holy man in any of the duties of life? Was Jesus any the less holy or spiritual in the sight of the Father because He walked among men, and was "made in all things like unto His brethren?" Condescension does not imply degradation, nor does it imply the least loss of spirituality. Was Jesus any more carnal when "He eat and drank with His disciples during forty days after His passion" than He is now, when at the right hand of the Father? Why then should He and His people be rendered more carnal when the humiliation is passed and the curse is removed, because their glorious reign shall be

manifested here rather than elsewhere? The corrupt earth could not make them carnal, why should the renewed earth do so?

2. Take the admitted views of our brethren respecting heaven itself. Suppose the "kingdom upon earth" to have passed away. The earth is now destroyed, and the whole Church is glorified and dwells in some remote habitation. This they call heaven. But even there, are there not "thrones, and principalities, and powers?" Is not "Christ head over all?" Do "not the saints reign kings and priests for ever?" But what if you now just imagine the renewed earth itself to be that habitation? Is the spirituality of the place suddenly deteriorated? Can we conceive of any more spirituality in the one case than in the other? We think not.

It is trifling to be cavilling about the stones of Christ's palace, or the material fabric of His throne. If these things were really involved in the question, we might reply that

we pretend not "to be wise above what is written." Perhaps, also, questions on these points would be quite as difficult to answer on the theory of a distant heaven as on our own. But these things do not enter into the question. The only essential point here is, that both sides thus admit that Christ is to be somewhere a visible reigning King over the "nations of the saved." Now, if He can be so without a loss of spirituality in one place, why not in another? To our mind there is no conceivable reason against it:-unless, indeed, we take up with the notion that a condition is the more spiritual in proportion as it eludes our comprehension and becomes shadowy. In this case the argument is, that a distant heaven is more spiritual, only because it is supposed to be more ethereal. We must frankly confess our persuasion that this, after all, is the real foundation of much that is objected on this score.

3. Take, in the next place, the commou view of the millennial kingdom which many anticipate before Christ's advent, Suppose

this kingdom come. The earth is now "full of the knowledge of the Lord." We ask now-where is Christ the king? It is replied, "He is in some distant, invisible place, which we call heaven." "In His human nature, as 'God manifest in the flesh?"" "Yes; the same." "And He reigns there?" "Yes." "And looks down thence upon His distant kingdom?" "Yes." "Well, is this carnal?" "No; this is a spiritual view." Now suppose that instead of remaining away from this renewed earth, Jesus should draw near with His host of holy and glorified saints, and take up His abode in immediate proximity to it. Suppose, further, that at the same time, He should open the eyes of the holy inhabitants of the earth to behold His glorious dwelling-place-"the tabernacle of God with men,"-and that the nations should walk in the light of His glory .- "What would this be?" This, it seems, is thought to be carnal. Now we must confess our utter incapacity to detect the reason why this simple change of place should infuse the element of carnality into the scene.

4. Take the present earth before the fall. Our brethren are all willing to admit that had Adam continued sinless—had no curse been imposed—and had his descendants ever remained a faithful, holy race, "hearing the voice of the Lord" walking continually among them—this would have been spiritual indeed. In truth, God himself has declared such a state "all very good," and who shall gainsay it?

But, to expect a renewed earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness,"—to behold there the wonderful mystery of "God, manifest in the flesh," with a glorified body, "like unto his brethren,"—to see Him "the second Adam" there, ruling over the men whose flesh he had "quickened," and had refined and exalted in this quickening, so as to fit it to "inherit incorruption" and "the kingdom of God,"—in a word, instead of this earth in its former state, where all men would be holy, indeed, but yet only feeble men—and

their habitation glorious indeed, but yet only glorious as was the first paradise,-to expect to see this earth exalted and purified,—"death swallowed up in victory," the grave made a place of refining,-men clothed with spiritual bodies,—the Head o all, the second Adam, not merely a living soul, but a quickening spirit,—God not only walking with men, as in Eden, but "dwelling with them,"—the whole "groaning creation delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,"-and the earth thus exhibiting, as completed, God's original purpose in its creation, in "the kingdom prepared for its inhabitants before the foundation of the world,"-ah! why is all this to be esteemed as carnal?

On the whole, then, we cannot find it in us to affect, as some do, such a contempt for this "earth which the Lord has given to the children of men," and "in the habitable parts" of which the Son of man "rejoiced" because "his delights were with the sons of

men." Nor can we go so far in our zeal for spirituality as to declare with some "that when we leave this earth, and behold the glories of heaven, we shall never wish to return to this former wretched abode of mortality." We must believe that our heaven will be wherever our Lord shall be. If he shall see fit to return hither "with ten thousand of his saints," we shall rejoice to return with him; yea, and to remain here as long as He does. Moreover, inasmuch as God has "founded this earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods," so that "it cannot be removed," but "abideth for ever:"-if He shall see good-after "shaking once more the heavens and the earth," so that the "things capable of being shaken may be removed," and that "those which cannot be shaken may remain,"-to fit up this renovated earth for the "kingdom which cannot be moved," so that the "meek may inherit the earth,"-we believe that we shall there see reasons enough, and glory enough, yes, and spirituality enough too, to cry-"Let me see the good of thy chosen, that I may

rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance:" let "my eyes see the King in his beauty, and behold the land that is very far off."

Nоте H, р. 78.

We use the terms literal and figurative, in the limited sense usually accepted in this controversy. In fact, the appellatives, literalists and spiritualists, are not strictly descriptive on either side. The former admit that much of the language of Scripture is figurative; and the latter as strenuously insist that much, even in the prophecies, is to be taken literally.

A very pleasant way of putting down the literalist (as the phrase goes) is to quote sundry passages of Scripture, and then make merry, at his expense, over "wines on the lees"—"rivers of water flowing from the belly," and the like. We should have been spared many a pang, inflicted by beloved brethren, if the simple fact mentioned above had been heeded.

A more serious method is, to refer to some prophecy, and then because certain words therein are manifestly figurative, triumphantly to inquire whether the whole is not a mere figure. Thus because "Israel is to blossom and bud;" Israel itself must be a figurative expression;—the subject as well as the thing predicated. But who ever uses figures thus? Would not this be to strip language at once of all definite meaning? Take the Bible and read at the first opening .- "And the Lord came unto Abraham, saying, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Here shield is plainly figurative. Open at the poetry.-" But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God." Figure again. Now did God in the first case, and did David in the second mean himself, or not? If not, whom did he mean? A very prolific question when that door is once opened.

Our objection then to the interpretations of some of our brethren, is not that they refuse to divest the Scriptures of all figurative language; but that they insist upon con-

sidering passages and expressions as figurative when nothing in the context demands or justifies it.

On this subject we submit a few general principles. 1. That God uses language in addressing us just as we use it to each other. 2. Where figures (not symbols) are introduced, it is for the purpose of light and impressiveness, not to darken and bewilder. The embroidered imagery upon the curtains of the tabernacle carries the mind the more naturally and directly to the wonders within the veil. 3. That no single, comprehensive rule applicable to the undiscriminating measurement of every passage can be adopted. Light can be obtained only by the particular examination of each passage individually. How far is this text figurative? How far is it literal?

We take this opportunity to express, in common with many others, our obligations to the editor of the 'Theological and Literary Journal,' for his valuable labors in this

department. We hail his efficient aid the more joyfully, as we have long felt that the accurate adjustment of the laws of figurative and symbolical language and their proper application verse by verse, to the prophetical Scriptures, has been the grand desideratum in this controversy. We hesitate not to declare our conviction that this would go further to give the church a clear understanding of "the things which are freely given to us of God" than volumes of learned discussion in other directions, however useful the latter may be in its proper place.

Note I, p. 83.

Every day confirms our persuasion of the danger of the prevailing mode of speaking of the coming of our Lord as if it were a figurative expression. The time of death—the destruction of Jerusalem—as well as the outpouring of the Spirit, to which we have already referred, are repeatedly spoken of in such a way as to leave the impression on the church that these things may be regarded as

a proper fulfilment of the phrase. If the church will admit and will sustain such an interpretation, what can be expected but just such results as already begin to dawn? We may refer, in this connexion, to a book* which has appeared within a few days, in which the whole drift of the author is to maintain the proposition that "The second coming of Christ with its associate eventsthe end of the world; the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment-must already have taken place; and all expectation of these events, as still future, are forbidden by the Scriptures." This is a bold step, but we think a very natural one. We cannot help regarding this book as the necessary result of the prevailing mode of speaking respecting the kingdom and the advent of our Lord. For, what concerns us most is, that the author of the book in question undertakes to prove his point upon the admitted principles of those who adopt the common theory of a spiritual reign. The book is well worthy of attention. We ask

^{* &}quot;The Second Advent," &c., by Alpheus Crosby.

our brethren seriously to look at it. If such indications as this do not open our eyes to the importance of this subject, our apathy will only be another "sign of the times." Here is the dearest hope of the church struck at, and that too with a sword professedly taken from her own armory. will hope, however, for better things. is it not a little startling that this century should witness the revival of the old heresy, "that the resurrection is past already?" Some may disregard this, on account of the quarter from whence it comes. They will wait for some defection in the orthodox portion of the church itself. But the sapper generally begins his work at some distance from the walls. Besides, we believe that such a doctrine could not be ably started from any quarter—and particularly with this vantage ground which orthodox men have themselves afforded, by their interpretations, -without "overthrowing the faith of some."

The apostle John tells us of a form of antichrist (2 John v. 7) which denies that "Jesus Christ is to come in the flesh:" (ἐρχόμενον, not έληλυθότα* as in 1 John iv. 2.) But we should hardly have so soon expected any signs of its approach. We know also who has told us that the full grown form of this infidelity is yet to be manifested in the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Is there not special need then just now of the apostle's added injunction:—"Let us look to ourselves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward?" 2 John v. 8.

^{* &}quot;To come," not "has come" as in the English version.



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